

The Society for Agriculture Health Environment Literacy Innovations (SAHELI)
WOMEN'S FORUM
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

The SAHELI has been working for the empowerment of rural, tribal and poor women and promote gender equity. These women have been organized on the lines of SHGs and subsequently women leadership was tried to build up. Along with these, efforts were made to intervene in the instances of gender based violence and early marriages of girls. The SAHELI and its project staff were directly leading these tasks. But the experience has shown that the leadership for such efforts must be taken up by the women themselves to be more effective and sustained. Further, the women in the target area remain kept off from the mainstream of women empowerment process in the state of Odisha. Hence, it was decided to create a Women's Forum (WF) in the target area to lead the activities to prevent gender based violence and early marriages and to promote gender equity.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the WF are:

- Promote leadership of women in the target area to address all issues related with gender equity and violence
- Get the women linked with the women empowerment process taking place in the state of Odisha

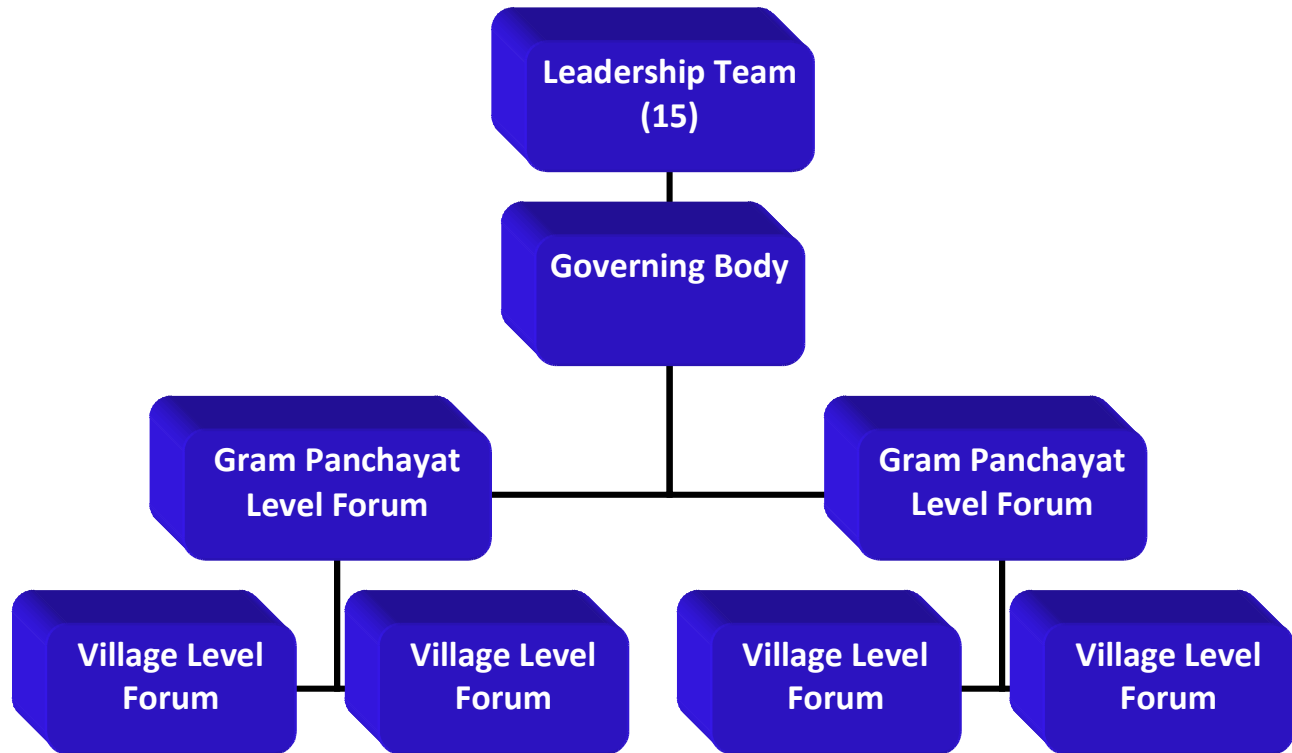
3. Mobilisation

The first step is to mobilize the women towards this forum. The steps involved in this mobilization are:

- Discuss the concept and roles of the WF in the meetings of all SHGs
- Share the idea with the SHGs formed by the ICDS too.
- Convene the meeting for half day of the leaders of all SHGs (promoted by the SAHELI and the ICDS) on revenue village basis to discuss the concept of WF and select five representatives each from such meetings
- Convene the meeting for half day of the leaders of all the identified five leaders on Gram Panchayat (GP) basis to discuss the concept of WF and select five representatives each from such meetings
- Convene the meeting for one day of the leaders identified at GP level for the entire project area to discuss the concept of WF, select leadership tem of 15 members and to work out action plan.

4. Structure

The structure of the forum is presented below.



The leadership team will be headed by the Convener and the term of the position of the Convener is three years.

5. Functions

- Lead the mobilization activities for gender equity
- Give directions to SHGS and VVCs to remain vigilant on the instances of GBV and early marriages
- Support SHGs and VVCs to report the instances of GBV and early marriages
- Take critical and important cases to the Police and the Judiciary
- Keep regular contact with the JJB, CWC, CDPO, Family Court, the Police and the DLSA
- Liaise with local leaders and women leaders in the target area
- Link with the similar women groups functioning in the target area

- Coordinate with all women programmes implemented by the governments

6. Documentation

Regular meetings, once in a month, will be held by the Leadership Team and once in a quarter by the Governing Body. The other bodies in the structure are not regularly meeting ones and meet only as and when needed.

The Leadership Team and the Governing Body are expected to keep the following documents: membership register, minute book, cash book, programme register and report book. It has to maintain a few files of correspondence.

7. Support

The WF will be supported by the SAHELII project staff. The support of other groups and agencies will be secured for the WF. The SAHELII will endeavour to get the support from donors too.

8. Linkages

The WF will get linked up with all government bodies and programmes. Similarly, the WF will be linked with other women groups in Odisha.